

Preserving Our Rural Heritage

The natural beauty and rural character of the Blackbird-Millington Corridor is being squeezed and fragmented by development pressure from all directions. Preserving our heritage requires your help.

This spring local farmers, loggers, hunters, businesspeople, scientists, conservationists, retirees and families came out to express their common concerns and values for the area. More than 130 area residents lent their expertise to community workshops this spring. **Please add your voice to this discussion!**

In order to develop strategies with broad public support, we are asking community members to consider various scenarios. Please read through these three approaches and think about the pros and cons of each. These approaches are not intended to be mutually exclusive choices but rather to represent different perspectives on the issue of preservation. You are not expected to choose one approach over another -- in fact, we would be surprised if you found any one approach to be the perfect answer.

Contact Corridor Outreach Coordinator Judy Hopkins at (302)653-9078 or jhopkins@tnc.org, or use the tear-off below to let us know what you think about these approaches. We look forward to hearing your opinions, reactions, thoughts and questions!



"Together we are mapping the conservation needs of this beautiful area."

- Judy Hopkins, Blackbird-Millington Corridor Outreach Coordinator and local resident, farmer, and realtor



Please mail or drop off to:
Judy Hopkins, BMC Outreach Coordinator
507 Blackbird Forest Road
Smyrna, DE 19977
302-653-9078 ♦ jhopkins@tnc.org

The Trade-Offs

	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
I. We should leave preservation efforts up to the community even if it will be difficult for them to provide the time, expertise, and resources needed for the process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II. We should document and require protection of important resources and areas even if it impacts local residents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
III. We should employ market-based mechanisms to guide development and resource use, even if it means higher fees to users.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
? I plan to attend the conversation and tour of Blackbird Forest's new education center on August 10, 2004. (See back page for details.)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

? What other comments do you have about the Corridor? _____

APPROACH I: LET THE COMMUNITY DECIDE

Proponents say:
People who live, play and work here know what is best for the Corridor. Landowners and farmers will act fairly but others must recognize they need the value of their properties and that they have the right to that equity.

- What could be done?**
- Provide for local control on decisions regarding the Corridor.
 - Increase public awareness of the goal and intent to establish a Corridor.
 - Compensate landowners for any loss in value of property.
 - Use and expand existing economic incentives to encourage voluntary action.

- Arguments against Approach I**
- Residents may not have the scientific data needed to make informed decisions about protecting habitat.
 - Independence and stewardship work well on individual properties but not for a region because of the lack of a big picture perspective.
 - We don't have the money to buy all the land that needs protecting.
 - Local community may not have the time to commit to this work.

Tradeoffs
Are residents willing to assume responsibility for action even if the process is difficult, time consuming, and full of tension and differences of opinion?

APPROACH II: LISTEN TO THE "EXPERTS"

Proponents say:
This is a rare opportunity to preserve natural resources, systems and species. Preserving right the first time means we will not have to keep coming back to fix it later. Protection will help retain value to the community in the long run.

- What could be done?**
- Inventory the Corridor and scientifically assess the resources.
 - Develop an environmental overlay zone where habitat protection and stringent environmental development regulations are required.
 - Align local and state government policies and programs to enhance the Corridor.
 - Engage experts from all sectors (public, non-profit, and private) in the effort.

- Arguments against Approach II**
- It would mean more government control over my way of life and property.
 - It will bring outside influence to my rural community.
 - It will place the needs of plants and animals before the needs of local people.
 - Increased regulation has the potential to decrease property values.

Tradeoffs
Are we willing to take tough preservation steps in the Corridor even if we know local residents may be impacted?

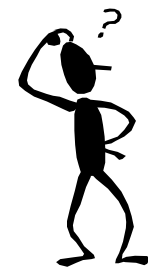
APPROACH III: PUT THE MARKET TO WORK

Proponents say:
Understand what is here now and work to preserve it. Growth is natural and will continue, but how and where growth occurs must respect the capacity of the region to sustain it. Market-based mechanisms have the most potential.

- What could be done?**
- Maintain a natural resource based economy. Ensure that working lands are profitable (agriculture, forestry, hunting.)
 - Create/enhance transfer and purchase of development rights programs to direct growth away from sensitive rural areas.
 - Reward environmentally friendly developers with tax incentives and density bonuses.
 - Require property tax revenue sharing in coordination zones around towns.

- Arguments against Approach III**
- Incentive programs (like CRP) take land out of productivity, hurting agriculture
 - Targeting growth to developed areas drives up the cost and is unpopular.
 - Insuring the future of farming is too big of a problem to tackle.
 - Developers provide what the market demands and have the right to their return on investment.

Tradeoffs
Are we willing to pay more in fees even if we may not immediately see the results?



What's YOUR Vision for the Blackbird-Millington Corridor?

Your knowledge about the Blackbird-Millington Corridor – past and present – is crucial to defining its future and helping it remain rural and natural in character. Look inside for information on how you can help.

YOU'RE INVITED!

Please join us at 8:30 a.m. on **August 10, 2004** for a conversation and tour of the new **education center at Blackbird State Forest**
The Tybout Tract , Blackbird Station Road

Come explore the new education center, learn more about how the Delaware Forest Service manages local forests and about conservation planning efforts underway for the Blackbird-Millington Corridor. The education center tour (inside and out) will begin at about 9:15 a.m. and last for about an hour.

Please RSVP by August 6, 2004 by calling 302-653-9078 or by using the tear-off section inside.



Blackbird-Millington Corridor News

June 2004

Conservation Planning for the Corridor

The Blackbird-Millington Corridor is a landscape of forests, farm fields, streams and tidal marshes that spans the Delmarva Peninsula. The Corridor is home to a wonderful diversity of plants, animals, and rare ecological systems -- and is The Nature Conservancy's newest priority area for conservation on Delmarva.

Over the years, the beauty and vitality of this region has been maintained by the good stewardship of local landowners and through the creation of public lands. However, as land values soar and encroaching development threatens to further fragment the remaining rural countryside, the future of the Corridor's natural heritage hangs in the balance.

In response to this opportunity, the Conservancy has launched a year-long intensive planning process to develop a community-based conservation plan. Local residents and others who care about the area -- farmers, families, hunters, loggers, hikers and scientists -- are invited to bring their knowledge and perspective to the table so that we can:

1. Find out what the community values and wants to preserve.
2. Share information on why scientists value this place how we can maintain and improve the ecological values.
3. Identify the overlap between community values and scientific values and what each group can do to protect those values.
4. Identify resources, tools, and programs that can help.



Corridor Facts & Figures

Location: North of Smyrna and south of Middletown, Delaware; from the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay near Millington, Maryland to the mouth of Blackbird Creek at the Delaware Bay.

Size: Approximately 52,000 acres.

Land Use: 50% forested with over 18,000 acres is agricultural land. More than 3,800 parcels of land in the Corridor. Few larger than 100 acres in size.

Wildlife: Over 200 rare or endangered species. Birds include the bald eagle, heron, osprey, and warblers; Many amphibians, including the tiger salamander.

Unique Features: The highest concentration of Delmarva bays (also known as coastal plain ponds) in Delaware. These small seasonal wetlands host many rare amphibian, plant, and insect species and are easily damaged by changes in groundwater flowage.



502 Blackbird Forest Road
Smyrna, DE 19977

Look inside for important information on how you can register your opinion on this important effort.